Teach Beyond Boundaries: The Conceptual Framework and Learning Philosophy of an Innovative Initial Teacher Education Programme in Wales

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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the development of one integrated ITE programme that leads to two QTS pathways: Primary Post-Graduate Certificate in Education with Secondary Enrichment; and Secondary Post-Graduate Certificate in Education with Primary Enrichment. The integrated ITE programme AberTeach[+] enables student teachers to 'Teach beyond boundaries for an all-through experience'. This paper reviews the programme's conceptual framework and learning philosophy and in so doing, considers the core principles that influenced the design of the programme, as follows: Inclusive Partnership; Effective Pedagogy; Integrated Pedagogy; Specialised and Enriched Pedagogy; Shared and Reflective Pedagogy; Truly Collaborative Research Culture, Democratic Accountability and the eight principles of the Learning Philosophy. The paper proceeds to explain how the integrated programme is delivered via a cluster hub approach across 5 hub regions in Mid-Wales. In doing so, it outlines the role of the University staff and Lead and Partner school mentors as well as

the minimum expectations for student teachers whilst on school experience. Consideration is also given to Welsh-medium provision and support as well as the centrality of research within the ITE Partnership as a whole. The paper closes by considering what is innovative about the programme and the benefits that student teachers gain from undertaking the programme.

Key words: Teach Beyond Boundaries, initial teacher education, innovation, Wales

Introduction

Aberystwyth University has a long-established tradition in teacher education and training in Wales. As a discipline 'Education' started in September 1892 following the opening of the Aberystwyth Day Training College and the university has taken the lead on various fronts from being the first university to appoint a University Chair in Education in England and Wales in 1893, as well as the first to appoint to a Welsh-medium lectureship in Education in 1958. Throughout its history, the areas of bilingualism, Welsh-medium teaching, history of education and rural education have featured strongly.

In 1992, Dr Gareth Evans in his preface to his book *Fit To Educate?* that celebrated the centenary of the Department of Education at Aberystwyth, wrote that 'teacher training may be facing its most significant change for hundred years' (Evans, 1992: ix). He was referring here to the radical changes brought in by Kenneth Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education and Science in 1992 that required all Initial Teacher Training (ITT) in England and Wales to involve partnerships between HEIs and schools. The Department for Education (DFE) Circular 9/92 (DFE, 1992) set out new criteria and procedures for the accreditation of courses of initial teacher training that required Higher Education Institutions to submit their development plans to the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) for institutional accreditation. It also meant that students were required to spend more time on school practice with an emphasis placed on the 'competences of teaching', and the requirement for schools to work in partnership with HEIs. Furthermore, procedures were put in place for The Offices of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools for England and for Wales (OHMCI) to complement CATE's work in scrutinising

development plans, as well as undertaking inspections of institutions in consultation with the Department for Education (DFE), Welsh Office Education Department (WOED), CATE and the HE Funding Councils.

If only Gareth Evans was able to see into the future, as the current procedures for accreditation and monitoring processes have similar under-pinning principles and expectations. However, there are certain key differences between these periods. Firstly, partnership working in 1992 and since, was rather a superficial relationship as HEIs had continued to retain the dominant accountability role, whereas the current accreditation criteria stipulate that 'HEI and lead partner schools share the development of programmes, including sharing accountability' (Welsh Government, 2017: 13) that indicates a move towards a democratic accountability rela-tionship (Cochran–Smith *et al.*, 2018). Secondly, in accordance with CATE's main principles in 1992, only institutions, rather than individual courses, were accredited for ITT, whereas the current accreditation process only accredits individual Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes.

The aim of this article is to describe and outline the development of the integrated ITE programme AberTeach[+] (see Figure 1) as co-constructed by a team of practitioners from schools, Ceredigion County Council and Aberystwyth University.

As commented upon by Professor Foster Watson[1] in 1907 in his corre-spondence to the Principal of Aberystwyth University, he was unwavering in his ideals that:

> These have been concerned with the creation of an atmosphere in which a University trained teacher should take his place on an equality, side by side, with the University trained physician, lawyer and clergyman – and that the way should be found for breaking down the barrier between the primary and the secondary teacher. (Evans, 1992: 76)

We are pleased to report that his vision has now come to reality in our new ITE programme that enables student teachers to 'Teach beyond boundaries for an all–through experience'.

Figure 1

Overview of ITE Partnership and Programme and why Innovative

Six school cluster hubs are tasked with delivering the Aberystwyth ITE Partnership and programme across five cluster hub regions. In each cluster hub there will be one Lead Partner School for every fifteen student teachers. The Lead Partner School will be accountable for standards, quality assurance, mentor development and professional learning for the school cluster that they will oversee. The integrated primary and secondary programme will mean that student teachers will gain experience of teaching across phases. In doing so, the common Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme will lead to two Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) pathways: PGCE Primary with Secondary Enrichment, and PGCE Secondary with Primary Enrichment.

Given the long-standing tradition in the UK whereby primary and secondary training occurs as independent PGCE programmes, we see our integrated primary and secondary postgraduate programme as unique and innovative in that it reconceptualises how student teachers should be trained today. Whilst this is the first PGCE programme to have an 'all through' structure in the UK, it was at one time standard practice for B.Ed. provision which allowed students to develop junior/secondary specialisms. Student teachers undertaking our integrated programme will be better prepared with the skills and experience to deliver the Curriculum for Wales and be able to do so across phases and sectors, leading to a more flexible workforce. Furthermore, the integrated ITE programme is delivered in both English and Welsh and thereby will promote the bilingual experiences of all student teachers. As a minimum expectation of the ITE programme all student teachers will be expected to progressively develop learners' everyday Welsh. This is in keeping with the demand for Welsh medium primary and secondary school teachers in mid-Wales and will contribute towards the Welsh Government's aspiration to secure one million Welsh speakers by 2050. Finally, in ensuring student teachers access a broad range of experiences on teaching placement, the ITE Partnership has identified the minimum expectations for student experiences on placement in order to ensure equity across clusters and partner schools. These expectations have been identified in relation to the four areas of core teaching experience, wider professional experience, mentoring, and contact with and observation by University staff.

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Conceptual Framework of ITE Partnership and Programme

In this section, we consider the core principles that influenced the design of the programme. These core principles are as follows: Inclusive Partnership; Effective Pedagogy; Integrated Pedagogy; Specialised and Enriched Pedagogy; Shared and Reflective Pedagogy; Truly Collaborative Research Culture, and Democratic Accountability.

Inclusive Partnership

For the Aberystwyth (Aber) ITE Partnership to be effective in delivering a successful programme, we consider this principle as the overarching core principle. It draws on the research of Thomas *et al.* (2009) and that of Cann *et al.* (2013) in order to implement the dimensions of partnership working that will contribute towards its effectiveness. Perceived challenges include finding appropriate partners; the consequences of an asymmetrical contri-bution of resources; consistency of partner representation; the time and resources required by partnership meetings; accountability; equality of access to quality provision; and the sustainability of partnerships with limited-term funding have been taken into consideration in the formation of the following values of partnership working, as below:

- Greater efficiency – Working in partnership allows for an integrated approach with members of the partnership each importing their own expertise. *In the case of the Aber ITE Partnership, working group members from Ceredigion LEA, Primary, Secondary and All-Through schools have contributed to the co-construction of the partnership's values, principles and ITE programme;*
- Equity – Working in partnership provides a structure for equal decision-making and permits local communities (schools / LEAs) to be equally represented. *In the case of the Aber ITE Partnership, there has been shared accountability, with working group meetings being co-chaired between the University and Partner Schools. It has further led to the creation of shared govern-ance structures at all levels of programme activity*;
- Effectiveness – Working in partnership enriches understanding, creates trust and increases the pooling of resources and skills. *In the case of the Aber ITE Partnership, work plans were distributed equally amongst working group members. This has facilitated co-construction and led to shared ownership of the ITE Partnership and its programme and enabled the partnership to draw on expertise and insight from a range of different contexts*;

• Choice – Working in partnership enhances the choice available to the student teacher. *In the case of the Aber ITE Partnership, the design of an integrated Primary and Secondary programme will lead to increased enrichment of experiences for the student teacher.* (Adapted from Cann *et al.* (2013).

Applying these values has led to 'true and deep' partnership working that underpins the following facets of partnership working: initial partnership and programme development; leadership and management accountability structure; programme delivery; localised support afforded to partner school cluster hubs; roles of partnership staff – university and schools; performance monitoring and accountability; research and professional learning; and marketing and recruitment.

All the above leads to 'inclusive partnership' whereby regardless of the locations of partner school cluster hubs (see Figure 2), the University will be seen to operate locally within each cluster community.

This is achieved by assigning school experience tutors to work with primary and secondary student teachers alongside partner school mentors across a cluster community. This approach addresses the challenges of rurality and the distances between schools and schools and the university. *In the case of the Aber ITE Partnership, it is imperative that the inclusion of rural schools is central to the delivery of the ITE programme.* This ensures student teachers experience the best practices across a range of school settings. In turn, members from the cluster community will contribute in the delivery of the university-based provision of the programme. This 'inclusive partnership' between the university and school clusters will inform practice at both locations (Conroy *et al.*, 2013).

The values and facets of the overarching core principle on inclusive partnership acts as a catalyst for the following core pedagogical, research and professional learning principles of the conceptual framework.

Effective Pedagogy

The programme's philosophy is focussed on effective pedagogy, in other words, what makes an effective teacher? Our aim is for student teachers to see themselves as teachers first and subject- or age-specialists second. The emphasis will be placed on the importance of understanding how teachers promote successful learning, as advocated by many researchers in the field (James and Pollard, 2012; James and Pollard, 2011; Nind and Lewthwaite, 2015; Siraj *et al.*, 2014). In doing so the programme will draw upon

Figure 2
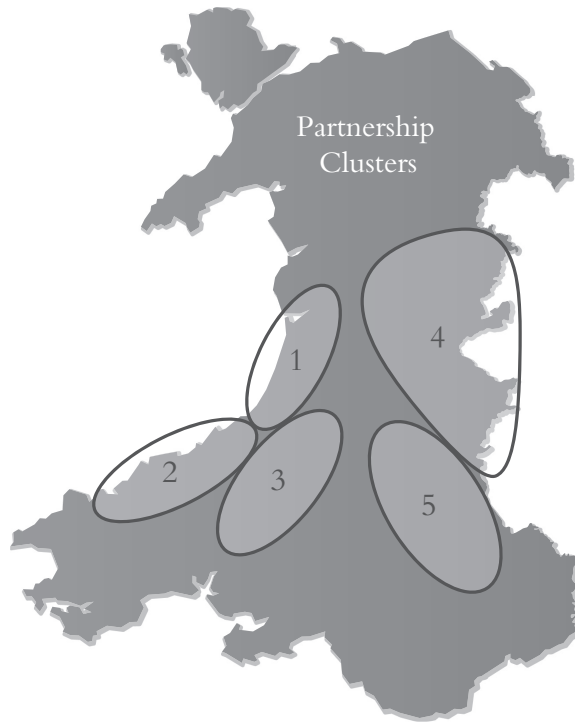
examples of best practice both nationally and internationally with respect to learning and teaching.

Integrated Pedagogy

Given the nature of major change in education and the move towards a more innovative and integrated 3–16 curriculum for Wales there needs to be a fresh and more creative approach to Initial Teacher Education. Student teachers will require a greater in-depth understanding of how children develop and learn across ages. Consequently, the programme's philosophy is to educate and develop student teachers to teach across both primary and secondary sectors as informed by other researchers in the field (Wellcome Trust, 2009; Sutherland *et al*. 2010). This philosophy (see Figure 3) is in

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Figure 3
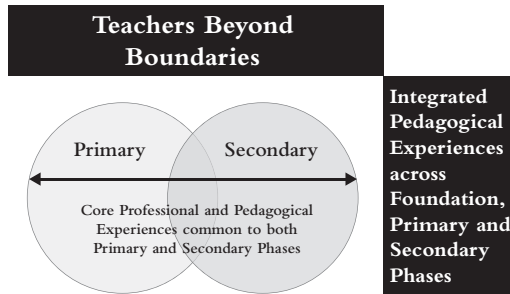
keeping with the emergence of All-Through schools not only in rural authorities but also in urbanised areas. The integrated philosophy is also in alignment with the Curriculum for Wales 2022 that requires student teachers to develop cross–curricular learning.

The integrated philosophy will enable student teachers:

• to become more confident and knowledgeable with respect to the wider continuum from primary to secondary so they better understand where learners have come from and to where they will go;
• to understand, select and implement the most appropriate pedagogic approaches for the relevant primary and secondary phase;
• to observe, evaluate and share pedagogic experiences with peers, school experience tutors and mentors across primary and secondary;
• to be better prepared for the transition between key stages as well as from primary to secondary sector;
• to be better positioned to see how learners acquire key skills: literacy, numeracy, digital competency and Welsh language;
• to understand how learners learn across ages and to be better equipped to select appropriate modes of assessments;
• to be better equipped to deliver the emerging new curriculum;
• to become more employable as they will have a broader pedagogical understanding of both primary and secondary sectors, and therefore will be particularly well–suited for All-Through Schools; and
• to be flexible so that they can adapt to any teaching situations after gaining QTS.
(Based on responses to an online questionnaire, June 2017).

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Specialised and Enriched Pedagogy

The programme's overarching specialised and enriched pedagogy has been informed by the requirement to meet the criteria for external accreditation (Welsh Government, 2017), that ensures student teachers are familiar with the six areas of learning and experience and purposes of the new curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2017: 22–3) and are also provided with the appropriate subject and pedagogical content support for their chosen age-phase and subject specialism (ibid., 23). Given this accreditation requirement as well as the need to deliver the enrichment aspect of the provision, the programme requires all student teachers to specialise in a 'specialism', 'core', and an 'enrichment' element (see Figure 4). The programme's modular strands will enable student teachers who opt to specialise in primary or secondary to be taught together at university as well as on teaching placement. Although the draft curriculum for Wales as released in April 2019 (Welsh Government, 2019) will lead to the eventual removal of the Foundation Phase and Key Stages, we are currently operating in a

Figure 4

	Specialism Strand	Core Strand	Enrichment Strand
	28 hours contact time	14 hours contact	14 hours contact time 5 weeks school experience
	21 weeks school experience		
Secondary Student Teacher	**Subject Specialism** (28 hours contact time)	**1 KS3 Area of Learning** (related to Subject Specialism – 14 hours contact time)	**1 KS2 Area of Learning** (related to Subject Specialism)
Primary (KS2) Student Teacher	**All KS2 Areas of Learning** (28 hours contact time)	**All Foundation Phase Areas of Learning** (14 hours contact time)	**1 KS3 Area of Learning** (Personal choice of area – 14 hours contact time)
Primary (FPh) Student Teacher	**All Foundation Phase Areas of Learning** (28 hours contact time)	**All KS2 Areas of Learning** (14 hours contact time)	**1 KS3 Area of Learning** (Personal choice of area – 14 hours contact time)

transitional period between the outgoing National Curriculum and the Curriculum for Wales 2022 and for that reason we have retained the use of the Foundation Phase and Key Stages (see Figure 4) until the new curriculum has been fully introduced in schools.

Overall, this core philosophy will enable student teachers to specialise in one of two QTS pathways, either Primary with Secondary Enrichment or Secondary with Primary Enrichment (see Figure 3). Consequently, owing to the knowledge and time in the enriched phase, student teachers will have a better working understanding of the transition between different key stages that will lead to the development of a seamless continuum in the learning process.

Shared and Reflective Pedagogy

Primary and Secondary student teachers will receive common core modules so that they acquire an in-depth knowledge and understanding of education as a whole. This will enable primary and secondary peers to share and reflect upon subject knowledge that will underpin the areas of learning and experience. Student teachers will work with other students from different subjects and phases in order to prepare them for effective cross-curricular work in schools. On school experience placements, student teachers will benefit from three school experiences; the first being School Experience 1 (Specialism and Core); the second being School Experience 2 (Enrichment); and the third being (Specialism and Core). Key features of supporting student teachers on placement, as informed and adapted from the Glasgow Partnership Model (Conroy, Donaldson and Menter, 2014; Conroy *et al.*, 2013; McLean Davies *et al.* 2015), will include the following 'Partnership Stakeholder Reflective Model' as a requirement of each Partnership School Cluster hub. This ensures consistency in the quality and equity of support given to student teachers as well as to partner school mentors and staff across all school cluster hubs within the region of the ITE Partnership Group. Key features of the 'Partnership Stakeholder Reflective Model' are as follows:

• School-based Group Reflection on Learning Weeks (Reflection Weeks): University Link Tutors will lead the team delivering the programme, which will include a variety of activities and speakers. One Reflection Week per teaching placement (Specialist School Experience 1, Enrichment Experience and Specialist School Experience 2) will be

delivered in Lead Partner Schools although some parts of the programme may take place elsewhere. All student teachers in the cluster will attend;

- Programme of Seminars: University Link Tutors will plan the programme of seminars for delivery in Lead Partner Schools of the cluster hubs. Seminars will take place in Lead Partner Schools and all student teachers in the cluster will attend. Seminars will be open to cluster school staff as well as to students; staff will be encouraged to participate as their professional learning needs indicate;
- Programme of Learning Observations: These learning observations focus on integrating theory with practice (Conroy *et al.*, 2013). They are non-judgmental and during the programme, each student teacher will observe their peers' lessons in all three placements (Specialist School Experience 1, Enrichment Experience and Specialist School Experience 2). These learning observations will encourage the student teachers to reflect on what they have seen and how it will affect their practice.

### *A Truly Collaborative Research Culture*

The collaborative ethos and model extend to research and is based on a set of shared expectations with regards to engagement with research and enquiry, at all levels of activity within the partnership. At the heart of this model will be the student teachers, who will be expected and supported to engage with research-informed pedagogical approaches, research evidence, data and enquiry processes during their training experience, their University-based module experiences and their assessed work. They will be supported by their mentors and link tutors in this endeavour and have access to a wider constituency of research support and expertise, both within the University and the School cluster.

In seeking to develop a culture of research and enquiry, we considered carefully the need to create opportunities for staff throughout the partnership to be supported and equipped to become 'discerning consumers' and active producers of research (BERA, 2014: 11). We were also mindful of the key role to be played by schools 'in enabling student teachers to teach, research, reflect and evaluate' (Welsh Government, 2017: 12). Opportunities for conducting, sharing and applying insights from research evidence in keeping with national priorities relating to professional learning (Welsh Government, 2018b) and schools as learning organisations (OECD, 2018) will be embedded into activities throughout the partnership, at all levels: school-based research seminars and events will be held to showcase

research-informed practice and build capacity in research methodologies and to facilitate engagement with research-based evidence; schools will be active partners in research-based activities, and will be fully involved in identifying areas of activity and professional concern for inquiry, to serve the overarching objectives of improving practice within schools, and of enhancing student teachers' experiences.

The diagram below (see Figure 5) is a 2D representation of the relationships between individuals/stakeholders with the student teacher as the core element. The impact of this relationship is ultimately focused on improving pupils' learning. Research engagement will be key at all levels but will be tailored to take account of the specific needs of each of the stakeholders.

Figure 5

University

Cluster
(Lead School)

Link Tutor
(Academic Tutor)

Mentor
(School Staff)

Student
Teacher
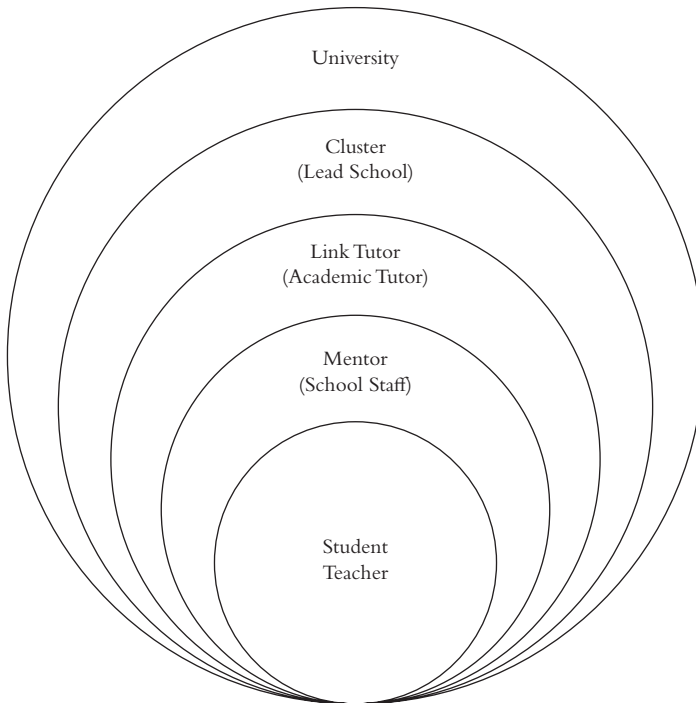
The Continuum of Professional Learning

The partnership is an opportunity to share professional learning with all staff in partner schools. This will take the form of:

• School staff not directly involved in ITE will be invited to participate in seminars;
• Schools or the University will identify areas of common interest in the partnership and develop training to meet the need;
• The University will play a pivotal role in developing the research skills of staff in schools. The results of their research can then feed into training programmes;
• As part of the PGCE programme, the University will run thematic one-day conferences for students, which would be open to partner schools. Possible themes are: Additional Learning Needs, developing writing, digital competence and leadership, but opportunities are plentiful. The conferences will span the range of needs of professional learning in keeping with the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership (Welsh Government, 2018a); and
• The School of Education will liaise with partner schools and other departments in the University to plan subject-knowledge courses and conferences for teachers to refresh their subject knowledge and engage with new areas of research and enquiry.

Democratic Accountability

Earlier in this paper, we stressed the importance of 'inclusive partnership' as the overarching principle to deliver a successful partnership. Central to this, is the notion of accountability, particularly where the locus of accountability lies between partnership stakeholders. Despite the foundation of the partnership model in 1992 aspiring to partnerships between HEIs and schools (DFE, 1992), the relationship balance has remained fairly static in terms of the distribution of accountability within many partnerships, with HEI generally assuming the lead role as was the case with the previous system of Centres of Teacher Education. This situation has to change if future ITE partnerships will be effective in determining change at a national level. Cochran-Smith *et al.* (2018) in examining the power relationships in the democratic approach to teacher education accountability, sees 'intelligent professional responsibility':

'…as a key part of our larger proposal for reclaiming accountability in teacher education. We intend intelligent professional responsibility to be an umbrella term signalling that democratic accountability in teacher education is grounded in trust of the profession, builds on professionals' knowledge and collective commitments to local and larger goals, and yields useful and usable information concerning program improvement. To do so, there is balance and equality of power across stakeholders, who jointly determine accountability mechanisms, processes, and content through rational consideration of individual and common interests. All of this is based on development of a generative and reciprocal relationship between internal and external accountability. (Cochran-Smith *et al.*, 2018: 167)

Cochran-Smith *et al.* (2018) further see democratic accountability as more than just realigning the locus of accountability between stakeholders but rather as accountability grounded in strong democracy and strong equity. They see 'the goal of teacher education is preparing teachers who know how to create democratic learning environments that enhance students' academic, social, and emotional learning and also prepare them to participate in a complex, diverse, and divided democratic society' (Cochran-Smith *et al.* 2018: 163). The implementation of our new curriculum aspires to achieving this, but it will take time. Given that our current education system has been driven by high-stakes, external accountability and monitoring systems (Connolly *et al.* 2018), it is therefore not surprising to find the dominant accountability paradigm prevailing in ITE. We do, however, acknowledge moves towards relaxing some of the external accountability mechanisms in other areas of the Welsh education system that were instituted post-2010 (National Assembly for Wales, 2018).

Consequently, in our case in forging a new ITE partnership and programme, we have started on the journey towards democratic accountability. This is more complex than it sounds, as it requires individuals as well as institutions to change. In our particular case, we have started to embark on setting the foundations for democratic accountability in place. These foundations are presented in the following table (see Table 1) mapped against aspects of democratic accountability in teacher education as identified by Cochran-Smith *et al.* (2018).

The above aspects of democratic accountability are further illustrated by considering the key responsibilities of Lead Partner schools as well as the roles of University Link Tutors and partner school mentors. These are outlined as follows.

Table 1: Mapping ITE Partnership and Programme against Aspects of Democratic Accountability in Teacher Education

Themes	Aspect Description	Aberystwyth ITE Partnership and Programme
Foundations of Accountability	Shared vision for the common good	• As a partnership, our goal is to attract and retain the best teachers for our schools in the mid-Wales region, as well as developing and supporting bilingual practitioners. • The programme develops student teachers to teach across phases in different school settings. • There is collaboration to promote the enhancement of high quality teaching and learning throughout mid–Wales.
	Democracy	• The accountability monitoring and reporting systems ensures that democratic decision-making and strong sense of internal accountability is promoted. The degree of democracy will evolve as the ITE programme beds in.
	Equity	• Work plans are developed equally amongst partnership group members. This has facilitated co-construction and led to shared ownership of the ITE Partnership and its programme and enabled the partnership to draw on expertise and insight from a range of different contexts. • As the ITE programme is an integrated primary and secondary programme, there is equity in how primary and secondary students are trained and supported both in university and school placement.
Teacher Education	Professional learning	• The partnership model means that lead partner schools are regional whole–school training establishments that facilitate high quality teacher development and support across their cluster of partnership schools. • Schools will be active partners in research–based activities and will be fully involved in identifying areas of activity and professional concern for inquiry, to serve the overarching objectives of improving practice within schools, and of enhancing student teachers' experiences.
Power Relationships in Accountability	Professional responsibility	• Owing to the co-construction of the ITE programme, lead partner schools will have shared responsibility for overseeing quality assurance, management, recruitment process and professional learning for their cluster hub region. • The emphasis and approach to partnership working has led to an environment of trust and cooperation.

Lead Partner Schools

- To establish a culture where ITE is accepted and delivered as a core responsibility. To designate an appointed senior (SLT – Senior Leadership Team in Lead and Partner School) coordinator, including mentors to deliver a whole-school approach to support student teachers and to encourage an openness to examine and debate whole school pedagogy and assessment practices in light of evidence of research;
- To oversee how Partner Schools across the cluster hub are actively engaged in research activity, working collaboratively with the University;
- To show how research is leading/influencing their teaching practice across the cluster hub;
- To ensure ITE is a key priority within the SDP and SIP. To have clear focus for whole school development of ITE and that all staff and gover-nors have key stakeholder roles in terms of progress, monitoring and QA;
- To incorporate the monthly QA recommendations into the SDP and SER evidencing diagnostic analysis and measurable targets linking directly consistency and improved quality of teaching and learning within all schools involved in the ITE;
- To provide a central role in ensuring clear working documents to be used by partner schools are in place, e.g. student teacher course handbooks;
- To support mentoring, supervision, constructive feedback, and assessment to ensure student teacher are able to meet all standards of QTS during their school experience;
- In partnership with HEI to ensure student teachers receive regular struc-tured opportunities to reflect/analyse their school experience, whilst also drawing on professional knowledge including theory and research thus synthesising academic study and classroom practice;
- To support and liaise with HEI to ensure the partnership is consistently overseeing all aspects of students' school experience; and
- To identify and contribute to the needs of teachers and provide staff training and infrastructure: staffing structures, staff development strategies, and scholarly culture to ensure that all designated staff for ITE provision are equipped to make these contributions to the ITE programme.

Lead Mentors

The Lead Mentor is based in the Lead Partner School and oversees the school-based provision for the cluster. Duties include:

- ensuring that Senior and Teacher Mentors are in place for all students in the Partner Schools;
- working with University Link Tutors to ensure that all mentors are trained;
- working with University Link Tutors to ensure that all mentors are trained;
- working with University Link Tutors on quality assurance of provision and standards across the cluster; and
- oversight of students' wellbeing in the cluster.

Senior Mentors

The Senior Mentor oversees provision for all students in a single school. In the case of small, federated schools, one Senior Mentor may cover more than one school. Duties include:

- planning and delivering the school–based Induction Programme for students;
- planning and ensuring the quality of the school–based Professional Studies sessions;
- joint observation with the Teacher Mentor of at least one teaching session;
- meeting with students once a week to check on progress and well–being;
- working with the Teacher Mentor to assess students' professional practice; and
- quality assurance of provision and standards across the school.

Teacher Mentors

The Teacher Mentor works with the student teacher on a day–to–day basis and is responsible for delivering the school–based subject/phase pedagogic support. Duties include:

- planning the students' timetable (see below);
- ensuring that students have access to the same resources as other teaching staff;
- reviewing and giving feedback on the students' lesson plans;
- ensuring that all the students' lessons are observed and that the student receives timely and constructive feedback. On some occasions and

especially in secondary schools, this may be done by members of the department other than the Teacher Mentor; and

• meeting with the student for an hour once a week to reflect on the week's progress, set targets, and complete the weekly assessment record.

Mentoriaid Iaith

The Mentor Iaith works with Welsh-medium students to support and develop their skills of teaching, preparing resources and marking in Welsh. Duties include:

• reviewing and providing feedback on plans and resources; and
• meeting with the student once a week to address individual needs.

University Link Tutors

The Link Tutor works closely with the Lead Partner School to identify opportunities within the cluster. During School Experiences 1 and 2, the Link Tutor will arrange the programme of Learning Observations for all students in the cluster. Further duties include:

• overseeing the assessment of students' school experience. This will include:
  1. liaising with school mentors to ensure that the planned programme enables the student to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the Qualified Teacher Standards (QTS);
  2. liaising with school mentors to monitor the progress of each student, to ensure that students are receiving appropriate feedback and to work with mentors to plan any additional support needed. University Link Tutors and Mentors will co-observe to support their assessment of the student, however, for the QTS students will be assessed on all aspects of their professional contribution to the school as evidenced by the standards; and
  3. liaising with Mentors to jointly draft and agree on the final report for each student teacher on SE1 and SE2 (including Enrichment).

Learning Philosophy

Eight principles are central to the philosophy for teacher education that is found within AberTeach⁺. The first seven of these principles are loosely based on the principles identified by Korthagen *et al*., 2006). Each of these eight principles are outlined by considering how they apply to the ITE programme and specific Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership.

Principle 1: Learning about teaching involves continuously conflicting and competing demands

Learning about teaching requires an engagement with a variety of people, of learners, of backgrounds, of environments, of organisations, and these factors create a competing and complex landscape in which to work. Opfer and Pedder (2011) identify this complexity of environments, and how they may interact differently at different times, with different people, and at different intensities. The student teacher must thus be prepared to nego-tiate these influences, and this provision must expose them to these complexities whilst preparing them to adapt and manage the variety of circumstances and situations. Thus there is a vital importance to the delib-erate encouragement of cognitive conflict in student teachers' thinking (Cobb *et al*., 1990, cited in Opfer and Pedder, 2011: 388) but the reciprocal relationship of the school and university in a clinical model can contribute effectively to the co-creation of knowledge (McLean Davies *et al*., 2015).

> *This ITE programme will encourage cognitive conflict through an integrated teaching approach where student teachers will have to establish and justify their own pedagogy and practice in the light of pedagogy and practice from different teaching phases.*

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership: Pedagogy, Collaboration

Principle 2: Learning about teaching requires a view of knowledge as a subject to be created rather than as a created subject

Learners are active meaning makers who construct meaning rather than receive it and thus require connections to be made, a context in which to

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learn and a challenge to the 'equilibration' of the mind. This is based on a constructivist, Piagetian perspective but whilst also accommodating the Vygotskyan view of the influence of social activity and context (Moore, 2000). The integration of student teachers' learning across the phases, and their deliberate interaction with peers, mentors and tutors, provide that contextual dis–equilibration, in order to enable them to actively establish and justify their own learning and perspectives for teaching. This can contribute additionally to the integration of practice and professional learning (Conroy *et al.*, 2013).

> *This ITE programme demands that student teachers engage individually with pedagogical concepts and ideas ensuring that they must establish and justify a flexible and responsive personal perspective on teaching whilst understanding and respecting the views and needs of others.*

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership: Pedagogy, Professional Learning

Principle 3: Learning about teaching requires a shift in focus from the curriculum to the learner

Fullan (2011: 3) states that 'Starting within the classroom the basic building block is instructional practice linked to student achievement' which he calls the instruction–achievement nexus. Hattie (2012) identifies that among key mind frames for impactful teachers are that they 'believe that their fundamental task is to evaluate the effect of their teaching on student's learning and achievement' (Hattie, 2012: 182) and that they 'want to talk more about the learning than the teaching (p.185). The focus here must therefore be on ensuring that the student teachers' focus lies soundly on the learners and their success and progress. This does not in any way undermine the need for pedagogical content knowledge but provides a clear focus for application.

> *This ITE programme places a distinctive emphasis on the centrality of learner progress as a measure of effective teaching with subject and phase specialisms established but drawing upon the principles of effective teaching found across phases and subject areas.*

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership: Pedagogy, Innovation

Principle 4: Learning about teaching is enhanced through (student) teacher research

Developing and improving teaching and learning is essentially based on action and reflection (Bartlett and Leask, 2009) and this is the basis upon which teacher research is built. There is some consensus that research in educational settings is an essential contributor to the development of practice and policy (Curtis and Pettigrew, 2010) although the student teacher needs to understand the limited nature of action research and the potential criticisms of such research in terms of 'validity, credibility and triangulation' (Curtis and Pettigrew, 2010: 57). There is a need to 'bridge the gap between codified research knowledge and the everyday 'craft' knowledge of teachers' (Wilson, 2013: 3) and thus it is essential that student teachers are thus provided with the tools and opportunities to study and engage with, and in, teacher research. The opportunity for collaboration and consideration of authentic issues within a clinical model enhances research-based interactions (Conroy *et al.*, 2013).

> *This ITE programme exemplifies research informed practice whilst insisting that student teachers are equipped to engage with research and are committed to inform their practice on the basis of robust research evidence.*

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership: Pedagogy, Professional Learning, Innovation.

Principle 5: Learning about teaching requires an emphasis on those learning to teach working closely with their peers

An integrated programme insists on the co-operation and collaboration of student teachers, tutors and mentors across phases and subject areas. Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism identifies the social and cultural influence on a learner's development and through relationships, connections and interactions learners can 'collaborate towards a shared goal' (Gray & MacBlain, 2012: 71). Linked to this concept, Hattie (2012: 73) identifies the 'power of teachers working together critiquing their planning'*,* as a strong outcome of the Visible Learning research and thus the close co-operation of student teachers with their peers, their mentors, school staff and tutors must be a core aspect of the provision, in order to enable the achievement of successful teaching.

> *This ITE programme establishes the principles and methods of collaboration and co-operation across phases and subject areas that will form the grounding of future practice.*

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership: Pedagogy, Collaboration, Leadership

Principle 6: Learning about teaching requires meaningful relationships between schools, universities and student teachers

The essential relationship between the partner organisations and the student teachers has been clearly evidenced, since it has the potential to have significant influence on practice in schools as well as in the content of taught courses, and the placing of university staff within schools contributes to this (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Zeichner (2010) confirms that student teachers are more able to be successfully trained where there is careful co-ordination and mentoring between school and university partners. Where that network of professionals' roles has been clearly and explicitly defined in partnership, then the disconnect between university and schools is reduced and best practice is achieved (Allsop, 1994). For this reason, strong and close partnership relationships are an essential aspect of this provision and the adoption of a clinical approach enables valuable peer engagement for student teachers (Conroy *et al.*, 2013) and brings clarity of understanding to the craft of teaching (McLean Davies *et al.*, 2015).

> *This ITE programme is created and maintained in partnership between the partner schools and university, leading to a seamless integration of agreed learning experiences throughout the training provision.*

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership: Pedagogy, Collaboration, Professional Learning

Principle 7: Learning about teaching is enhanced when the teaching and learning approaches advocated in the programme, are modelled by the teacher educators in their own practice

Due to the multifaceted nature of teaching and the variation in the learning environment, Boyd *et al.* (2011) identify the need for teacher educators to develop modelling as a method within their teaching, which involves the practical use of methods and procedures with the student teachers rather

than the transmission of information alone. This provides better opportunities to engage with the rationale, justification, thinking process and feelings that complement the actual practices (Loughran & Berry, 2005). Modelling thus offers methods of enhancing the understanding of experiences by dis-assembling the teaching process, by emphasising the complexities of teaching, by acknowledging the differences between teaching intent and actual teaching behaviours and providing opportunities for collaborative teaching which opens out new possibilities (Loughran & Berry 2005).

> *This ITE programme exemplifies best practice in the provision across the whole year with university link tutors kept at the cutting edge of pedagogy through their close engagement with the partnership schools.*

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership: Pedagogy, Professional Learning, Innovation, Leadership

Principle 8: Learning about teaching is nurtured and enhanced via a deep-rooted reflective process between peers, mentors and tutors

Schön (1983) has brought the concept of the reflective practitioner to attention, as a professional will engage with his or her work environment and adapt practices. This is an essential concept for student teachers to establish at the beginning of their careers, thus forming mind-sets for the future. Zwozdiak-Myers (2009) has identified different dimensions of reflective practice in the context of teaching, and these can be used to understand and develop practice. The establishment of good practice in this regard is vital, since it has been suggested that the classroom environment may have an effect in limiting creativity and change over time (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Consequently, the 'clinical placement' model, where tutors are located within school clusters, becomes an essential ingredient to facilitate reflection, change, nurture and development (Conroy *et al.*, 2013). The localised presence of university based tutors addresses the need to ensure that reflection is purposeful and effective and does not become a superficial justification of actions and practice (Hattie, 2012) and can, indeed, contribute to the reflective development of mentors and tutors as well as student teachers (McLean Davies *et al.*, 2015).

> This ITE programme provides a structured framework for reflection, establishing time and methods to enable reflective interactions by all student teachers, tutors and mentors.

Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership: Pedagogy, Collaboration, Leadership

Conclusion

Inclusive partnership working as alluded to in this paper, has been integral to the co-construction of our ITE programme and without trust and agreed principles for co-working we would not have achieved what we have done. The integrated ITE programme that requires student teachers to teach across phases both primary and secondary reconceptualises teacher education is unique. To some this may be seen as challenging and a step too far but in fact the programme will better prepare student teachers for the profession and more so the Curriculum for Wales 2020. In addressing accountability, we have made positive strides in re-aligning accountability within our ITE partnership to be on a more democratic footing, and in endeavouring to build a sense of 'internal accountability' that is based on collective responsibility, consultation and shared endeavour (Fullan *et al*., 2015). Yet, Cochran-Smith *et al*. (2018) remind us that true democratic accountability functions on a 'generative and reciprocal relationship between internal and external accountability (Cochran-Smith *et al*. 2018: 167). The future success and sustainability of democratic accountability within teacher education will therefore be highly contingent on a supportive and aligned system of external accountability that affords partnerships sufficient scope to build effective internal accountability that is 'owned' by their stakeholders. We contend that systems of external accountability – in ITE and beyond – must create and sustain the conditions for the development of democratic and strong internal accountability within partnerships but must conversely avoid the paradox of seeking to mandate and manage their development. If accountability continues to be seen as high-stakes external accountability, then the regional, internal democratic accountability model will become stifled and restricted. Now is the time for professional bodies in Wales such as Welsh Government, Estyn and the Education Workforce Council to work together with ITE partnership providers and USCET Cymru in forging democratic partnership working at the national level.

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Notes

[1]Foster Watson succeeded Henry Holman as Master of Method and Professor of Education [1894–1913]. He established the study of Education as a worthy subject for undergraduates and from 1896–7 was taught at Aberystwyth as a University undergraduate subject that led to the introduction of an Honours degree in Education from 1913–14. The Day Training Department was established to train teachers for elementary schools and from 1894, the College advertised The Training Department of Teachers for Secondary Schools. Watson emphasised the importance of professional training for all teachers. He believed that a way should be found to break down the barrier between the primary and the secondary teacher – a vision that is central to our new integrated ITE programme today. Foster Watson became the first to receive from Aberystwyth's Council the title of Emeritus Professor following his retirement.

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